CROYDON PHILATELIC SOCIETY:

MINUTES OF THE MEETING – 22.10.2013.

WENDY BUCKLE gave an excellent presentation on **LATVIA** from 1785 to 1945.

Latvia was originally part of the Kingdom of Sweden but then became part of the Russian Empire. The earliest cover shown was of 1785 with a Riga place stamp. In 1857 the Russians introduced postage stamps and numerical cancels. Wendy's display showed a variety of covers and postage stamps including commercial mail and military mail used by the Germans during World Way I.

Following the First World War Latvia became independent and issued their own stamps. There were some very unusual items – a sheet of stamps printed on the back of a map and the printing of stamps on banknotes. During the inter-war period a variety of papers were used in the stamp printing process and many forgeries were produced.

The stamps from 1920-1945 included early commemoratives, definitive issues and the only miniature sheet produced in the country. During World War II, following the invasion by Germany, German stamps were used with an overprint. After the war the Soviets re-invaded Latvia and the country was once again re-absorbed into the Soviet Union. Since 1989 the country has once again been independent.

Graham Harker, Honorary Assistant Secretary
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